

This is a mirroring poem. Mirroring is an ancient art, still practiced by some masterful elders today. I am apprenticing to learn this art. Mirroring is a way of giving a story back to its people. It is a way to reflect someone's own words back with fierceness, and great love. This mirror is dedicated to the participants of the Oslo, Norway, conference on *Transforming in a Changing Climate*, whose words I heard and used in my closing remarks.

## Maybe

Well, if you ask me now  
what brought us together? –  
I would say “emergency.”  
The Great Emergency.  
Some called it climate change,  
others poverty and injustice.  
The familiar litany, you know,  
the ugliness that may cost us our skin,  
the 833m-in-diameter pimple on the face of the Earth.  
The catastrophized future.

And if you ask me now  
I'd say we were lost in the middle of that forest.  
Oddly enough we barely considered the trees or the ravens.  
But it seems like we wanted to be found.  
We stood in the middle of that forest, on fire, and were looking for soul.  
We wanted a purpose.  
We wanted to help, all geared up and impatient  
and yet somehow treading water, standing in place, but not still.  
Willing and well intentioned, for sure,  
looking for direction and ready to prepare the ground  
for something new to grow out of.

But if you ask me now –  
The door didn't open quite yet.  
We looked to innovation and imagination.  
We looked to systems and leaders.  
We looked to others for failure and to ourselves for success.  
We looked for love in all the wrong places.  
We even invited a trickster who twisted our minds,  
who seduced us into believing we could replace the multi-armed C  
with the one-handed H.  
Ah, surely, there is a destiny, a land without dragons.  
In the meantime, we were like dogs without owners:  
We continued doing whatever we pleased.

So if you ask me now  
I'd say we didn't break terribly much new ground.  
We barely looked at the necessity of breaking down old structures –  
including those within our own worlds of living and working, including those  
    within ourselves.  
But maybe we started to build a raft to cross an unknown sea.  
Maybe, at least, we started gathering some wood, some rope, some reeds,  
while others sat down  
in the midst of our collective madness  
to learn to read the stars to navigate out of the hell they sold  
    and we bought willingly.

Yes, if you ask me now  
I'd say, we started to help each other through  
Even if we could barely imagine the toward.  
We at least named how transformation sucks,  
how continuity and stability are bloody lovely things  
how we are interested in just a thin bright slice of a possibly dark future  
how much love we will need  
how the voices of the future are already among us.  
We began to recognize the discomfort and promise in our diverse adventures of living.  
It started to dawn on us that we wanted a guidebook  
    but that there was none.  
And if there had been one, we would have had to throw it out  
    once we started moving.

So, if you ask me now  
I'd say, surely, it was not a non-event.  
We accepted the responsibility of being the lucky ones.  
We acknowledged how bad we actually are at being change-makers.  
We woke up and started to take liberties –  
like the liberty to reinvent what it means to be human.  
We considered the possibility of transformation not being what is yet to come  
    or yet to be created  
    but what we already find ourselves in.  
We considered the possibility of acting dutifully given our past,  
to act morally now,  
to take care of the future.  
We found ourselves in the middle of the ultimate cuddle  
and saw that it was from that place, that a novel world would have to unfurl,  
that our choice was not to lead or go home,  
but to go home  
and lead.

Susi Moser  
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